

*Hiss, Alger ✓*RECEIVED
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Alger Hiss' wife, 81; husband's chief defender

New York Times News Service

NEW YORK—Priscilla Hiss, the wife of Alger Hiss, who steadfastly defended her husband at his two trials for perjury, is dead at the age of 81.

She died Sunday in St. Vincent's Hospital and Medical Center here. Mrs. Hiss, who was 81 Saturday, had been ill since suffering a stroke in 1981. She had lived in Greenwich Village since 1947 and at the Village Nursing Home since 1982.

Mrs. Hiss was thrust into the limelight in 1948 when her husband, a former State Department official, was accused of being a spy by Whittaker Chambers, an admitted former courier for a Soviet spy ring. Throughout Hiss' two perjury trials, in 1948 and 1949-50, and in the years that followed, she staunchly maintained her husband's innocence.

His first trial ended in a hung jury, but Hiss was convicted of perjury at his second trial for denying to a grand jury that he had passed secret State Department documents to Chambers. He served 44 months in prison.

MRS. HISS testified at both trials. Her testimony centered on two key

prosecution contentions: that she had typed on a family-owned typewriter copies of the secret documents for transmission to Chambers in 1937 and early 1938 and that she had seen Chambers after Jan. 1, 1937. She denied both assertions.

She married Hiss in 1929. They separated in 1959 and lived apart but did not divorce.

Before the notoriety of the trials swept over her life, Mrs. Hiss, who shared with her husband a strong interest in bird-watching, had worked as an office manager for Time magazine in New York City and had taught English at Potomac School in Washington and at Dalton School in New York. She was a graduate of Bryn Mawr College in Pennsylvania and received a master's degree in English literature from Yale University.

After Hiss' conviction, she worked as an editor at several publishing houses in New York City, including the Golden Press, the children's book division of Western Publishing Co.

Besides her husband, she is survived by a son, Tony, and a son by a previous marriage, Timothy Hobson.